

Why the name Robins Avenue/Close?

Meet the Rev Francis Robins

by Amy Myers

Lenham's vicar from 1678 to 1701 was the Rev. Thomas Robins, but it was another Robins, Francis, who gave the name to the Lenham charity. Francis Robins, to whom a marble monument was placed in Chart Sutton church when he died at the age of 55 in 1720¹, was a senior fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and seems to have had close links with the Filmer family at East Sutton Place, as one source² has it that the £3 per annum to the poor of Lenham was to be paid out of the estate of Sir Edmund Filmer of East Sutton. Francis Robins' relationship to the Reverend Thomas of Lenham is also not clear, but from the dates he might have been Francis's father. If so, Francis followed him in his calling, as Francis became rector of St Peter's church in Cockfield, Suffolk.

The poor of Lenham were not the only recipients of Francis Robins' bequests: his will reads: 'Item: I give to the poor of the severell parishes of Sutton Valence, Cockfield and Lenham the severell summes of three pounds a piece to each parish to be distributed yearly for ever on the eleventh day of March by the Minister and Churchwardens of the three above named parishes amongst the most indigent and honest poor people such as chiefly are sick or dont receive constant alms but are willing to keep out of the poor rates by their own labour and industry.'³

It's not known when the distribution 'for ever' came to an end for the Robins charity, which has now disappeared.

¹ *An Epitome of County History: County of Kent*, Christopher Greenwood 1838

² *A Topographical and Genealogical History of the County of Suffolk*, Compiled by Augustine Page 1817

³ As quoted in *Materials for a History of Cockfield Suffolk*, Churchill Babington, c 1880. Reprinted from 'Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History